

LEXICOGRAPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE
OF PĀṆINIAN GAṆAPĀṬHAS

Pāṇinian tradition abounds in operative statements relating to the specific groups of vocables such as conjugational groups (*gaṇas*) like *bhvādi*, *adādi*, etc., or other minor localized groups like *yajādi*, *puṣādi* (vide 6.1.15; 3.1.55), etc. The *Gaṇapāṭhas*, specially appended to the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* corresponding to its respective statements, however play a most significant role in the definitive and operative process of linguistic description.

The total number of these *Gaṇapāṭhas* (GPs) is 258. The *Aṣṭādhyāyī*-chapter wise distribution of GPs, as follows:

I	6
II	24
III	13
IV	100
V	61
VI	36
VII	7
VIII	11
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It will be seen that only 6 GPs are appended to Chapter I; they all deal with definitions. The vocables designated as *Sarvanāman*

are included under *Sarvādi* GP (*sarvādīni sarvanāmāni* 1.1.27); those as *avyaya* (indeclinable) under *svarādi* (*svarādinipātam avyayam* 1.1.37); those, as *nipāta*, under *cādi* (*cādayo' sattve* 1.4.57) and *prādi* (*prādayaḥ* 1.4.58) and those as *gati*, under *uryādi* (*uryādicividācas' ca* 1.4.61) and *sākṣātprabhṛti* (*śākṣātprabhr̥tīnica* 1.4.74).

The maximum number of GPs (100) is appended to Chapter IV that deals with the Secondary derivative affixes. If 61 GPs of Chapter V (dealing, primarily, with the same affixes) are also added, the number of GPs specifically relevant to the treatment of Secondary derivatives alone would come to 161 representing 75% of the total number of GPs appended to the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*.

GPs constitute an integral part of the Pāṇinian system of linguistic description. The vocables listed in a GP are organised according as they suit a specific or general grammatical, definitive or operational statement, as illustrated above in relation to GPs of chapters I and IV and V.

The vocables in a GP are listed, not in an alphabetical order. But sometimes they are listed as constituents of initially accented (*ādyudātta*) and finally accented groups (*antodātta*) by rotation (cf. GP 1.4.57).

Generally speaking, one specific statement refers to one GP alone. But there are quite a few statements that refer to quite a few GPs. There is one statement (4.2.87) that encompasses 17 GPs relevant to 17 specific Secondary derivative affixes respectively.

Sometimes GPs themselves provide specific semantic or definitive shades to the vocables listed or even referred to. For example the vocable *sva* is designated as a *sarvanāman* only when it does not convey the sense of “kins” or “wealth, property” (*svam / ajñātidhanākhyaām*, GP 1.1.27; the same is also repeated in 1.1.35). Similarly GP 1.1.37 provides the general rule to the effect that the Primary derivative formations with affixes *ktvā*, *tosun* and *kasun* are to be treated as indeclinables; the same rule is repeated in the Sūtra 1.1.40 (*ktvā-tosun-kasunaḥ*). The word *sama* is simply included in *Sarvādi* 1.1.27. But Pāṇini himself does not consider this as a constituent of “*Sarvādi*” if it conveys the sense of “equal,

equivalent or similar” as evident from his statement *yathāsaṃkhyam anudeś’ aḥ samānām* 1.3.10. Thus GPs have their inherent links — direct or indirect with the relevant statements.

GPs provide considerable material for etymological or even historical studies with regard to vocables listed therein. For example, the vocables listed in the 17 GPs relevant to the statement 4.2.87 abound in such data. We learn, for instance, the etymological/historical backgrounds of the vocables *nagaram* and *Varāṇasam* from the above *Sūtra* read with GPs *as’ mādi* and *ṭṛṇādi* respectively. According to this statement, the vocables listed in GPs *as’ mādi* and *ṭṛṇādi* take the affixes *ra* and *sa* respectively if they convey the sense of “made by” (*tena nirvṛttam* 4.2.68). So *nagaram* = a habitation made by or surrounded by mountains = a city; *Varāṇasam* = a habitation made by or abounding in *Varāṇa* the tree *Crataeva Roxburghii* (*so katre*) = *Varāṇasa* = Banaras = *Vārāṇasī*.

The vocables listed in GPs, are all, of immense lexicographical interest. S.M.KATRE’s Dictionary of Pāṇini, *Gaṇapāṭha* (Poona, 1971) is the first attempt of its kind to present all the vocables (numbering about 8000) included in GPs (and also conjugational and other minor *gaṇas*) in an alphabetical order, on scientific lines.

Quite a lot, is of course required to be studied and discovered in the vast amount of material of lexicographical significance, presented in GPs which have not yet received the attention they eminently deserve. The concept of *Ākṛtigāṇa*, the irregular *nipātana*-formations such as listed in the *Pr̥ṣodarādi Gaṇa* have quite a lot to tell us about the subtleties of the Pāṇinian descriptive technique.